

glad as he saw that Dave had the horse firm and tight.

"Capital!" he cried. "I wouldn't have lost that horse for a fortune, and it means nearly that to get him safe back where he came from. Good for you, young fellow," he added. "I'll make it a lucky catch for you."

"A good beginning in my runaway career," said Dave to himself.

CHAPTER VI

CADMUS

"Look out!" shouted Dave suddenly.

In his eagerness to recover his horse, the man who had just come up to the scene of the capture ran directly up to the animal to promptly retreat in some dismay.

Without trying to break away from Dave the horse began to move rapidly in a half circle, using tail, rear hoofs and body as a menace against the approach of its master. Dave gave the animal another cookie, which quieted it down. However, the horse kept a constant eye on the man, who did not venture to approach any nearer.

"Well, well, well," laughed the man in a comical way, "this is a new stunt for Cadmus. Why, I thought we were friends, old fellow," he added, addressing the horse.

"Did he run away from you?" inquired Dave.

"First chance he got—and the only one, so far."

"How is that?" asked Dave curiously.

"He was raised a pet."

"Anybody can see that."

"Never heard of Cadmus?"

"Not until you called him that," replied Dave.

"Well, Cadmus is a famous racer."

"He looks it."

"Oh, he's made his name. Isn't that so, beauty?"

"Take care," again warned Dave. "Cadmus is still a little nervous."

In fact the horse had resented any nearer approach of its master. Dave almost fancied that the intelligent animal pressed up close to himself, as if asking protection.

"Thinks he's going to get the whip for breaking the rules," said the man. "I'll discipline him on feed, but I never strike one of my horses. I say, youngster, you've done me an immense favor. Will you carry it a little farther?"

"I'll try," replied Dave willingly.

"If you was going my way"—and the speaker nudged his shoulder down the road in the direction from which he had just come.

"Oh, any way suits me," responded Dave quickly.

"Then I wish you would lead the horse till we get to the car. Cadmus seems to have taken quite a fancy to you."

"He belongs in a car?" asked Dave, a little vaguely.

"Why, yes," replied the man, with a stare at Dave as if he supposed he knew that. "We're taking Cadmus to Brompton. They switched us in the yards, and some one left the car door open, and Cadmus made his break."

"Oh, I understand now," said Dave quickly, and then an eager thought came into his mind, as he wondered if this lucky incident might lead to his finding a way out of Brookville unnoticed.

The last cookie in Dave's hands kept Cadmus quite and friendly until they reached the railroad yards. The man piloted the way among a network of tracks, and finally along a string of freight cars standing beside a planked roadway.

"Here we are," he reported.

Dave noticed that the man had halted beside a light colored car bearing the words: "Palace Horse Car." A small colored boy dressed in a horse jockey's jacket, and a big husky fellow who looked like the hostler, were tilting a slanting platform up to the big door at one end of the car.

It took some persuasion to get Cadmus to go up this cleated platform, but it was finally accomplished. Dave looked around the car with some admiration.

"It deserves its name, 'Palace', doesn't it," he asked of the owner of the horse, who seemed greatly relieved to find the animal housed once more safe and sound.

"You ought to see the accommodations we have in a trip across the continent," returned the horseman. "This is nothing to it."

"This is pretty fine, to my way of thinking," declared Dave.

Fully one half of the car was given up to Cadmus. The box stall at one end was padded and cushioned to guard against jarring. The feed box was of porcelain, and the light blanket they put on Cadmus was as fine as a silk bedquilt.

"Come in, youngster," invited the horseman, when he had seen that Cadmus was attended to properly.

He led Dave into a partitioned-off apartment, comfortable as a boudoir in the Pullman sleeper. There was a couch, a table and plush covered easy chairs. Into one of the chairs Dave sank.

"I calculated I'd have had some trouble in getting that horse if you hadn't come along," asserted the man.

"Oh, when Cadmus got through playing he would have been docile enough," suggested Dave.

"And made me miss railroad connections and a big race to-morrow," added the horseman. "See, here," and he glanced into a pocket book he had taken out, and then drew a long slim book and a fountain pen from another pocket, "what's your name?"

"Why," hesitated Dave, "what do you want to know for?"

"I want to give you a check."

"What for?"

"To fix you out for your trouble."

"I wouldn't know where to cash it," declared Dave. "Besides, if you want to fix me out, as you call it, there's another way that would please me better."

"Just name it, youngster."

"This car goes to Brompton you told me, I think?"

"Yes, we start in about an hour."

"Well, sir," observed Dave, "if you will give me a free ride that far, I will consider that you have paid me a hundred times over for the little I've done for you."

"Little you've done for me?" cried the horseman. "I suppose you don't consider that Cadmus is just about worth his weight in gold to me. Now, see here," and the man took the pocket book out again and drew forth two bills. "There's all the currency I've got with me—two fives. You'll take them."

"No, sir," began Dave.

"You'll take them, I said," repeated the man in a forceful way. "And you'll give me your name and address, and promise that if ever you need a friend you'll send word to Amos Baker. Here's my card."

Money and card were thrust on Dave in spite of himself.

"My name is Dave Dashaway," he said, "but I have no address, and don't know how soon I may have."

"Oh, is that so?" observed the horseman, eyeing his companion curiously.

"Yes, sir. The truth is I'm leaving home in a hurry—but that cannot interest you.

"Yes, it will," echoed the horseman. "Tell us all about it, lad. Maybe I can give you some advice that will help you out."

Dave told his story, and his auditor listened to it with great attention.

"I like your pluck, and your plan to get to Fairfield is all right," said the horseman. "We'll be at Brompton in three hours. You've now got money enough to carry you to Fairfield and a good deal farther. You're going to Brompton is carrying you directly out of your route, you can ride as far as that, though, get off there and take the first train for Fairfield, see?"

"I shall never forget all your kindness, Mr. Baker," said Dave gratefully.

Just as a locomotive hitched onto the train of which the stock car was a part, Mr. Baker called in the colored boy. He gave him some orders, and in a few minutes quite a repast was spread out on the table from several hampers in the car.

The train reached Brompton after midnight. Mr. Baker shook hands heartily with Dave.

"I reckon nobody will be hanging around looking for you at this time of night," he observed.

"Good luck to you, youngster. If you have any further trouble with that pesky guardian of yours, drop me a line and I'll appear on the scene. Write occasionally, anyhow. I'll be glad to hear how you are getting along. If some mean people don't interfere, it will be in a good way, for you're the right kind of a boy to make a success, Dave Dashaway, and Amos Baker says it."

The freight train had stopped at a crossing, and as it moved on Dave had to walk down the tracks nearly one-half a mile to reach the railroad depot.

Dave trudged on hopefully to meet his first experience in a big city.